

# **OHIO ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS MEETING MINUTES**

December 20, 2016

The Ohio Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Committee) convened via teleconference to discuss civil rights concerns in the State. This was the first meeting of the Committee appointed November 18, 2016.

Diane Citrino chaired the meeting and performed the initial roll call of committee members present. The meeting was open to the public and took place from 10:30 am to 11:51pm, EST.

## **State Advisory Committee Members:**

### **Present:**

1. Bledsoe, Cassandra
2. Citrino, Diane (Chair)
3. Davies, Sharon
4. Forte, David
5. Gerber, Scott
6. Hernandez, Emerald
7. Thrower, Edith
8. Tryon, David
9. McDermott, Kevin
10. Salem, Robert
11. Strang, Lee
12. Strasser, Mark

### **Absent:**

1. Burstion-Donbraye, Deborah
2. Chandra, Subodh
3. Crosby, Catherine
4. Doshi, Dilip

## **Commission Staff present:**

- Mussatt, David
- Wojnaroski, Melissa (DFO)

## **Members of the Public present:**

- Ballinger, Jordan (Disability Rights Ohio)

## **Meeting Notes/Decisions Made:**

### **Welcome and Introductions:**

- USCCR staff introduced themselves and provided an overview of their role at the Commission.

### **Committee Roles and Responsibilities:**

- Ethics
  - The DFO provided an overview of the ethics regulations for Committee members.
  - As special government employees, Committee members may not engage in lobbying or fundraising during Advisory Committee Meetings, or any time they are acting in their official capacity as Committee members. When outside of Committee meetings and not acting in their role as special government employees, Committee members are free to engage in such activities.

- Committee members should not speak on behalf of the Committee in any public capacity unless officially authorized to do so by a majority of the Committee. Committee members are free to list their membership on the Committee as part of their credentials in public communications.
- If Committee members have any questions regarding potential conflicts of interest or ethics violations, they should contact the Regional Programs Unit to discuss at 312-353-8311.
- Scope of duty and jurisdiction:
  - Committee members reviewed the selected scope of duties and regulations for state advisory committees §42 U.S.C. 1975a (attached)
  - Project proposals should fit into the outlined scope of duties. As a Federal Advisory Committee, the Committee's role is to consider local or state-level civil rights concerns that have potential federal implications.
  - The Chair clarified that the Committee's jurisdiction is not limited to studying cases of intentional discrimination. Federal civil rights law may also apply to "facially neutral" laws and policies that result in a *disparate impact* on the basis of a federally protected category, regardless of discriminatory intent.

#### Commission Updates

- USCCR staff provided an overview of the Commission's plan for a 2017 Statutory Enforcement Report on civil rights and the administration of municipal court fines and fees.
- Where the topic may overlap with the Committee's next topic of study, the Committee is invited to consider such concerns as they may contribute to the Commission's national study.

#### Discussion

- Draft Committee Report: Human Trafficking in Ohio
  - The Committee reviewed the draft report provided resulting from the Committee's 2013 hearing on Human Trafficking in Ohio (attached)
  - Committee members offered the following comments/revisions:
    - It should be noted that one of the panelists, Deric Willoughby was scheduled to testify but did not attend the hearing
    - A recommendation should be added to the report to address any testimony received regarding the demand for trafficking. For example, increased penalties for those convicted of trafficking crimes.
    - On page 29, recommendation #5: it was proposed that the final sentence, "These populations require more attention and focus to ensure understanding of their vulnerabilities and needs so that responses are effective." be stricken from the report, in order to not draw resources away from other victims of trafficking. This amendment was tabled for further discussion at a subsequent meeting.
  - Edith Thrower moved to table further discussion of report amendments until the next meeting, to allow all Committee members additional time to review the report and prepare remarks.

- Committee comments and proposed revisions to the report should be submitted to the DFO no later than **Monday January 9, 2017**. USCCR staff will collect all revisions and send out a single, revised document prior to the Committee's next meeting (TBD).
  - Cassandra Bledsoe seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.
- Civil Rights in Ohio
  - The Committee reviewed civil rights topics individual members had proposed in advance of the meeting for consideration, in order to select their next area of civil rights study in the state (attached).
  - Cassandra Bledsoe moved for the Committee to select the first topic, "Race and Bail Reform in Ohio" as the Committee's next area of civil rights study.
    - The motion did not receive a second, and the motion died.
  - David Forte moved for the Committee to select the second topic, "Barriers to equal access to education in Ohio."
    - Sharon Davies seconded the motion.
    - The motion passed by a voice vote with a count of 11 "yes," 1 "no," and 0 abstentions.

Adjournment:

- David Forte moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:51pm EST
- Cassandra seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Next Meeting: TBD

- USCCR staff will poll Committee members for availability